



## 6.3 Family Problems

# Family Problems

## Spousal Abuse

- It is estimated that 29% of Canadian women have, at some point, suffered abuse from their partners
- In some cases it's the man that's abused but in most cases it is the woman being abused
- Men who abuse their partners generally come from a background with a family history of violence or abuse



# Family Problems

## Spousal Abuse

- They believe they have the right to dominate their spouses
- Sometimes supported also by the people around them
- When their domination is threatened, these men experience stress and they react to re-establish control

# Family Problems

## Spousal Abuse

- Feminist theorists maintain that dominant social attitudes support male power
- Ex.....boys more than girls are taught to be tough and hit.....
- Why do many abused women refuse to leave their abusive spouses?



# Family Problems

## Spousal Abuse

- A psychological pattern described as battered woman syndrome.
- Abused spouses become anxious and fearful. They develop emotional disorders and a pattern of learned helplessness
- This condition is used as a defence in court for women who commit extreme acts because they view these acts as their only option

# Family Problems

## Spousal Abuse

- Women are also sometimes unable to leave their spouses because economically they cannot support themselves and their children
- Also fear the reaction of their spouse at their decision to leave



# Family Problems

## Dealing With Abuse

- In 1993 “stalker” legislation was introduced that made it illegal for abusers to approach their victims, but these laws are not always enforced strictly

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# Family Problems

## Divorce

- Although marriage is traditionally seen as a lifelong commitment, a growing number of marriages end up in divorce
- In the 1960's it was difficult to get a divorce, since adultery and desertion were the primary grounds

# Family Problems

## Divorce

- The 1968 divorce act widened the grounds for divorce to include physical or mental cruelty, imprisonment, alcohol or drug addiction and separation for three years
- These changes resulted in an immediate growth in the divorce rate



# Family Problems

## Impact of Divorce

- Strong emotional impact on everybody involved
- Younger children suffer more of a short-term impact
- In the long run, girls may be reluctant to form close relationships because they are in fear of being betrayed

# Family Problems

## Impact of Divorce

- Boys may miss their fathers and may have more conflicts with their mother
- Level of parent conflict



# Family Problems

## Child Abuse

- A child can be abused in 4 different ways
  - Physical Abuse
  - Emotional Abuse
  - Sexual Abuse
  - Neglect

# Family Problems

## Child Abuse

### Physical Abuse

- Involves physical injury or harm to the child
- May be a result of a direct want to hurt the child but not always





# Family Problems

## Child Abuse

### Physical Abuse

- Sometimes result of severe discipline such as using a belt or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age



# Family Problems

## Child Abuse

### Physical Abuse

- Most abusive caregivers say that the abuse is a form of discipline
- Discipline is meant to teach right from wrong, not to make the child live in fear





# Family Problems

## Child Abuse

### Warning signs of physical abuse in children

- Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts.
- Is always watchful and “on alert,” as if waiting for something bad to happen.
- Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt.

# Family Problems

## Child Abuse

### Warning signs of physical abuse in children

- Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home.
- Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days.



# Family Problems

## Child Abuse



### Emotional Abuse

- emotional abuse can severely damage a child's mental health or social development, leaving lifelong psychological scars



# Family Problems

## Child Abuse



## Emotional Abuse

- Constant belittling, shaming, and humiliating a child.
- Calling names and making negative comparisons to others.
- Telling a child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake."
- Frequent yelling, threatening, or bullying.





# Family Problems

## Child Abuse

### Emotional Abuse



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# Family Problems

## Child Abuse

### Warning signs of emotional abuse in children

- Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.
- Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive).



# Family Problems

## Child Abuse

### Warning signs of emotional abuse in children

- Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver.
- Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, throwing tantrums).

# Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is an especially complicated form of abuse because of its layers of guilt and shame. It's important to recognize that sexual abuse doesn't always involve body contact.

Exposing a child to sexual situations or material is sexually abusive

## Family Problems Child Abuse





# Sexual Abuse

- sexual abuse usually occurs at the hands of someone the child knows and should be able to trust.
- most often close relatives

## Family Problems Child Abuse



# Sexual Abuse

## Family Problems Child Abuse

### Warning signs of sexual abuse in children

- Trouble walking or sitting.
- Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age, or even seductive behavior.
- Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason.

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## Sexual Abuse

## Family Problems Child Abuse

### Warning signs of sexual abuse in children

- Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities.
- An STD or pregnancy, especially under the age of 14.
- Runs away from home.

# Neglect

## Family Problems Child Abuse

- a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, or supervision
- alcohol or drug abuse may seriously impair judgment and the ability to keep a child safe.



# Neglect

Family Problems  
Child Abuse

## Warning signs of neglect in children

- Clothes are ill-fitting, filthy, or inappropriate for the weather.
- Hygiene is consistently bad (un bathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor).

# Neglect

## Family Problems Child Abuse

### Warning signs of neglect in children

- Untreated illnesses and physical injuries.
- Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments.
- Is frequently late or missing from school.